

Prescription for Health

2017 Outcome Report



PRESCRIPTION *for* HEALTH

Prescription for Health was generously funded by Saint Joseph Mercy Health System in 2017 with additional financial support from multiple partners. Washtenaw County Health Department coordinates the program. Prescription for Health connects the **medical system** and the **food sector** by creating a relationship between clinic staff, their patients, and local farmers markets. Health care providers write “prescriptions” for their patients to eat more fruits and vegetables. These prescriptions can be “filled” at local farmers markets, where participants work with a Community Health Worker to set health goals.

Participants received up to **\$100** in tokens to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets, as well as nutrition education and support.

During 2017, **415** patients from 14 different health clinics and agencies serving low-income individuals participated. A total of **\$28,073** was spent on fruits and vegetables at the markets, improving participants’ access to healthy foods and supporting the local food system.

Special thanks to our partners:

Aid in Milan, Faith in Action, Hope Clinic, IHA Milan Medical Center, Michigan Medicine Chelsea Health Center, Michigan Medicine Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools, Michigan Medicine Ypsilanti Health Center, Packard Health, St. Joseph Mercy Academic Internal Medicine Clinic, St. Joseph Mercy Academic OB/Gyn Center, St. Joseph Mercy Chelsea Diabetes Education, St. Joseph Mercy Neighborhood Family Health Center, UNIFIED – HIV Health and Beyond, Washtenaw County Health Department Tuberculosis Program, Chelsea Farmers Markets, Growing Hope’s Ypsilanti Farmers Markets, Milan Farmers Market, Pittsfield Township Farmers Market, St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Farmers Market, and Food Gatherers.

"I think it's a wonderful program! It's helped me financially and made me more health conscious." - 2017 Program Participant

Key Findings:

- Participant consumption of fruits and vegetables **increased by 1 cup per day** from pre- to post-program (n=254; mean=1.0; p<.001)
- Participants reported a **decrease in consumption of unhealthy foods** (i.e. chips, sweets, soda, or fast food) with the average changing from “3-4 times per day” pre-program to “1-2 times per day” post-program (n=255; p<.001)
- Participants reported an **increase in self-reported health**, with the average changing from “fair” pre-program to “good” post-program (n=256; p<.001)
- 89% of participants reported that the program **helped them manage a health condition** (n=235)
- 86% of participants (n=256) reported **knowing that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits could be used** at the farmers market post-program, compared with only 59% pre-program (n=410)
- 98% of participants surveyed said that the **Community Health Workers supported them** in eating healthier (n=55)

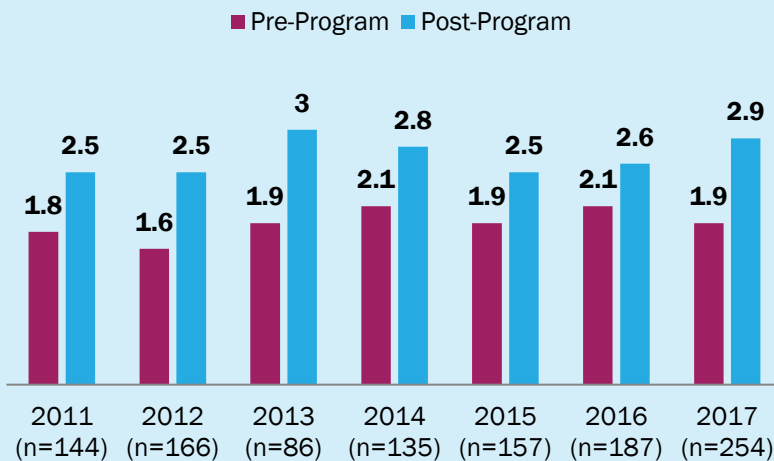
Demographics:

- 73% female
- 31% African American/black, 48% Caucasian/white, 7% Latino/Hispanic, 2% Asian American/Asian, 1% Native American/American Indian, and 11% identified as two or more races or other
- Average age: 46 years; age range: 1 year – 92 years
- 48% reported having at least one child living in their household
- 47% reported that they had previously participated in the Prescription for Health program

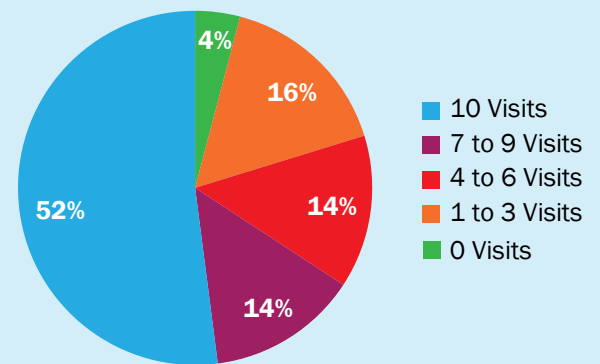
High Risk for Food Insecurity:

- 46% had a yearly income of less than \$15,000
- 62% reported that they or others in their home had cut the size of meals, skipped meals, and/or bought fewer healthy foods within the past year because of a lack of money for food
- 46% reported using SNAP benefits

Change in Fruit & Vegetable Intake
self-reported cups per day, pre- and post-program
statistically significant each year ($p < .001$)



Completed Visits among Enrollees
(n=415)*



*Each fresh food box pick-up for Milan enrollees counted as 2 visits.

How the Program Worked:

Clinic staff referred patients to the program based on food access difficulties, chronic disease risk, and interest. To enroll, patients attended a group enrollment session where they engaged in a discussion about the link between health, chronic disease, and food choices; set specific goals for healthy eating; and received a "prescription" for fruits and vegetables. Patients "filled" their prescriptions at participating local farmers markets.

When participants came to the Prescription for Health (PFH) table at the farmers markets, Community Health Workers (CHWs) reviewed the participants' goals and assisted them in setting a weekly goal. After the educational support, the patient received \$10 in tokens to spend on produce at the farmers market. Up to \$100, or up to ten visits, was allocated for each participant.

PFH extended through December via the indoor winter farmers markets in Ypsilanti and Chelsea and a monthly fresh food box distribution in November and December (\$20 worth of produce per box) in Milan.

Since 2013, CHWs have been formally integrated into the program to provide more peer social support, decrease barriers, and reduce costs. They assisted with enrollment and goal setting; called patients to offer support and reminders; provided referrals to other healthy eating resources, such as SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks; and administered post-program surveys.

Post-Program Survey Results:

Post-program survey results were obtained from 64% of program enrollees. Almost all of those enrolled visited the market at least once (96%), and 66% used seven or more of their allotted visits. The percentage of participants who used all ten of their visits increased by 3% compared to last year's program. The most common barrier reported to token redemption was being too busy.

Prescription for Health Economic Impact:

Participants spent a total of \$16,592 in PFH tokens at Growing Hope's Ypsilanti Farmers Markets (34.6% of all food access program dollars spent and 6.3% of total sales May-December), \$6,350 at the Chelsea Farmers Markets (53.9% of all food access program dollars spent and 4.3% of total sales May-December), \$4,060 at the Pittsfield Township Farmers Market (65% of all food access program dollars spent June-November), \$682 at the St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Farmers Market, and \$389 at the Milan Farmers Market. Additionally, PFH provided \$1,680 worth of produce through fresh food boxes.



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